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JUAN FERNANDEZ DE CASTRO RODRIGUEZ
ROLANDO MASFERRER

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TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (105-84265)

FROM: SAC, MIAMI (105-2307)

JUAN FERNANDEZ DE CASTRO RODRIGUEZ; ET AL;
 ROLANDO MASFERRER ROJAS - VICTIM
 KIDNAPING HICONSPIRACY; IS - CUBA
 (OO: Miami)

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 DATE OF REVIEW 8/3/91

On 2/10/60, group of 7 photos were shown to Mrs. CATHERINE TAAFFE by SAs ROBERT JAMES DWYER and GEORGE E. DAVIS at McAllister Hotel, Miami, where TAAFFE now residing. Included in group of photos was one of JUAN FERNANDEZ DE CASTRO RODRIGUEZ. Fronts of photos did not reveal identities of persons pictured. u

TAAFFE selected photo of de CASTRO as man who had been fellow passenger on PAA flight Miami to Havana about 12/6/59. Did not know name or other identity but recalled he had been met by someone at plane at time disembarked, was escorted aside from other passengers. This was last and only time she saw him. u

Later during interview TAAFFE asked Agents if they had photo of de CASTRO. Photo pointed out to her from among those already examined. She expressed surprise, u

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Special Agent in Charge

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stating she had not recognized it in comparison to photo of him she had seen in newspaper following his arrest. She then exclaimed she had seen de CASTRO at Hilton Hotel, Havana, on one or more occasions in 1/60 between 10th and 15th. She observed JORGE VALDES talk to de CASTRO after VALDES excused himself from her company in lobby of hotel on pretext of having to make telephone call. Said she had never met de CASTRO and his name not mentioned to her by VALDES or anyone else in Havana.

On 2/9/60 Sgt. HILLMAN, Dade Co. Jail, Miami, telephonically advised de CASTRO requested him to notify SA GEORGE E. DAVIS he wanted to talk to him. On same day SAs DAVIS and WILLIAM B. HOLLOMAN interviewed de CASTRO who related he was desirous of pleading nolo contendere as soon as possible and his new attorney, HENRY CARR, also favored this plea. De CASTRO expressed hope his hearing could be scheduled for 2/12/60 as his brother, ARTURO, of Havana, would be in Miami that date. He believes VALDES also desires to plead nolo contendere.

SAs HOLLOMAN and DAVIS took opportunity to question de CASTRO further re this matter. He reiterated circumstances, previously reported by this office, under which he had been sent to Miami by EFIGENIO AMELJEIRAS, Chief, Natl Revolutionary Police of Cuba, with instructions to contact VALDES and work with him on a job. Said this was his first assignment after being recruited into "Confidential A" section of Police by FERNANDO FUENTES COBA, Chief of that section. De CASTRO was named assistant to COBA.

Related he was not briefed by either AMELJEIRAS or COBA, or by VALDES as to nature of assignment and did not know it involved kidnaping plot until he contacted VALDES in Miami.

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De CASTRO said no one mentioned to him name of CATHERINE TAAFFE or any other woman prior his departure 1/27/60 for Miami. Immediately after being released by INS, Miami, on late afternoon 1/27/60 he contacted SA DAVIS by phone. Immediately thereafter he phoned VALDES at Miami International Airport Hotel. VALDES told him to call back at 7:00 P.M. Then went to home of uncle, ARTURO FERNANDEZ de CASTRO. At 7:00 phoned VALDES who instructed him to come to the hotel. Proceeded immediately by taxi to hotel where he met VALDES.

VALDES then briefed him and for first time he learned this was kidnaping plot against ROLANDO MASFERRER. Also, for first time, he learned a woman was involved. VALDES told him an American woman arranged for them to meet a Miami policeman at the hotel that evening. No other reference made to this woman; her name not disclosed by VALDES.

After VALDES and de CASTRO arrested and placed in jail, VALDES claimed to de CASTRO that this same woman also arranged for a boat in Miami, an American boat captain, and another man to transport MASFERRER out of Miami in connection with the kidnaping.

De CASTRO said that on 2/8/60 his brother, ARTURO FERNANDEZ de CASTRO, of Havana, visited him in jail. ARTURO told him the father of VALDES disclosed to him the American woman who figured in this matter was CATHERINE TAAFFE. Said this was first time he ever heard her name.

Upon return to cell, he questioned VALDES about TAAFFE. VALDES said he first met her in Cuba in connection with sugar business long time ago. Described her as woman who has many friends who are big people and that she only had to telephone them to get things done.

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De CASTRO said VALDES also told him in jail that whole plan in this case was his idea.

Noted de CASTRO has consistently adhered to same basic story. Has record of previous reliability in his dealing with this office. Miami of opinion de CASTRO has been substantially factual and truthful in this matter. Believed he has acted in good faith with the Bureau and will not violate Bureau's confidence. It is also felt this incident may enhance his position in "Confidential A" of the Police. It is obvious, of course, the Cuban Govt. cannot admit complicity in this conspiracy.

On 2/11/60 TAAFFE furnished signed statement in which she states plot to kidnap MASFERRER was conceived by VALDES, and discussed with her in Havana in 1/60. Said plan presented to an aide to RAUL CASTRO by VALDES and this aide agreed kidnaping of MASFERRER would be good idea and said \$50,000. could be allocated for plan. VALDES asked TAAFFE if she would contact Capt. LEE NAPIER of Miami PD and see if he would assist them. Said conversations with VALDES in Havana re this matter extended about 1/5-13/60. TAAFFE claimed she was never in favor of plan to kidnap MASFERRER and suggested the Cuban Govt. use diplomatic measures to bring MASFERRER back to Cuba. After plan developed sufficiently, she then thought plan could be handled in such a way that FIDEL CASTRO would get beached on some Bahama island; MASFERRER would not be there, and British and U.S. Govts would be notified; and this would have been excellent opportunity to embarrass Cuban Govt.

Judging from all evidence developed in this case, it appears info furnished to American Embassy by Sgt. FERNANDO FUENTES COBA has little, if any, basis in fact and is only attempt to hide complicity of Cuban Govt. in this matter.

REVIEWED BY *805* TASK FORCE

ON 10/8/97 *my/dal*

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